

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

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June 19, 1998



TO: All County Welfare Directors
All County Administrative Officers
All County Medi-Cal Program Specialists/Liaisons

Letter No.: 98-25

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALTY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The purpose of this letter is to inform counties that the Specialty Mental Health Services Consolidation Program will be fully implemented by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) in all counties except Solano and San Mateo Counties. The last county to implement this program is San Diego County, and this will occur on July 1, 1998.

This program will provide specialty mental health services to **ALL** Medi-Cal beneficiaries in the county or in Institutions for Mental Diseases through a Mental Health Plan (MHP), a managed care plan specializing in mental health services.

Notices have been sent to all Medi-Cal households in each county which explain how the beneficiaries may access specialty mental health services through the county MHP. The notices provide the name, address, and telephone numbers (local and toll-free, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week) of the MHP so that the Medi-Cal beneficiary can call the MHP to obtain more specific information about the program.

County welfare offices should have received an initial supply of 500 copies each of the English and Spanish notices for the individual county. These initial notices should be included in the intake package for all new applicants for the first three to six months of implementation in your county. Thereafter, DMH will be providing your county with an official intake form on this new program to be permanently provided to all applicants.

A threshold language is defined as 3,000 beneficiaries or five percent of the Medi-Cal population, whichever is lower, whose primary language is other than English according to the primary language of the beneficiary as indicated on the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System. If a county wishes to have the notice in a language other than the threshold language, a copy of the notice which may be duplicated as needed can be obtained in the following languages by contacting Ms. Elena Lara of my staff at (916) 657-0712:

English	Farsi	Russian	Cambodian	Tagalog
Spanish	Hmong	Mien	Cantonese	
Armenian	Korean	Laotian	Vietnamese	

All County Welfare Directors
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Page 2

If you have any further questions, please contact Ms. Lara at (916) 657-0712.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Angeline Mrva, Chief
Medi-Cal eligibility Branch

Enclosure

Sample

Notice to Medi-Cal Beneficiaries
about
Mental Health Benefits

The Medi-Cal program is changing the way people with Medi-Cal, including children, adults and older adults, receive mental health services in California. This change will happen in Butte County on April 1, 1998.

Instead of people with Medi-Cal finding their own psychiatrist or therapist when they need mental health services from these kinds of providers, they will go to a mental health plan in each county for services. Mental health plans are managed care plans for mental health services. Mental health plans have already been providing people with Medi-Cal with mental health services in hospitals since 1995.

The mental health plan in Butte County is Butte County Mental Health Plan. Their address is 107 Parmac Road #4, Chico, CA 95926. Their toll-free number is 1-800-334-6622. Their local number is (916) 891-2810.

Most services will have to be approved ahead of time by the mental health plan before the psychiatrist or therapist can get paid for the service by Medi-Cal. This is a change from the regular Medi-Cal program. Approval by the mental health plan can happen quickly if a person needs mental health services right away. If a person needs to be admitted to a hospital for emergency mental health treatment, the hospital services do not have to be approved ahead of time.

When people with Medi-Cal think they may need mental health services, they should contact either their family doctor or the mental health plan. For most people with Medi-Cal currently receiving services from the county mental health system, there will be no change in how they get services. People with Medi-Cal currently receiving services from other psychiatrists or therapists should contact the psychiatrist, therapist, or mental health plan to make sure that needed services are approved.

People may call the mental health plan's toll-free number to get information about the mental health plan's services, including how people may get mental health services and what to do if they are unhappy about the services. The mental health plan has a brochure that also has that information. You may call the mental health plan to ask for a brochure or to ask for a list of the mental health plan's psychiatrists, therapists, and clinics.

This change does not affect your rights under Medi-Cal. People who believe they need services still have access to the county patients' rights advocate if they are concerned about their treatment. People with Medi-Cal will also have a right to submit a grievance to the mental health plan. People also have the right to request a Fair Hearing from the State within 90 days if they have a problem with denial, reduction, or termination of mental health services.